All that we are is the result of what we have thought: all that we are is founded on our thoughts and formed of our thoughts. —*The Dhammapada*

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THE INTERVALS OF PEACE

IT is "natural," in terms of one aspect of the dual principle that we call human nature, to long for peace—to try, that is, to arrange one's life so that, even if peace is not a constant presence, there may be at least interludes of undisturbed calm which we can look forward to. How can one really work, we say, without at least some of the circumstances favorable to concentration and uninterrupted effort?

There is truth in this, yet it is also a fact of nature that out of storms, struggle, and sometimes agony come the periods of growth. The allegory of the "Great War" is said to represent the process of human awakening, and it often involves bitter fact, although the levels of the major encounters in life vary with the engagements of the warrior. A kind of *carte blanche* to thoughtful interpretation is provided by Mr. Judge in the Antecedent Words to his rendition of *The Bhagavad-Gita*. "If," he says, "the story of the *Mahabharata* be taken as that of Man in his evolutionary development, as I think it ought to be, the whole can be raised from the plane of fable, and the student will then have before him an account, to some extent, of that evolution." Further along, he continues:

> The battle refers not only to the great warfare that mankind as a whole carries on, but also to the struggle which is inevitable as soon as any one unit in the human family resolves to allow his higher nature to govern him in his life. . . . We see that Arjuna, called Nara, represents not only Man as a race, but also any individual who resolves upon the task of developing his bet-

> ter nature. What is described as happening in the poem to him will come to every such individual. Opposition from friends and from all the habits he has acquired, and also that which naturally arises from hereditary tendencies will confront him, and then it will depend upon how he listens to Krishna, who is the Logos shining within and speaking within, whether he will succeed or fail.

We live in unsettled and unsettling days. It is a time when men of the world begin to wonder whether the rock on which they thought they had built is not melting into shifting sands. Not even the high moral securities of a revolutionary cause seem available in an age that is exhausted from the exploitation of ideologies, and in which even the leaders, were the truth completely known, are beset by gnawing doubts. One senses that all about there are hungerings for a solid foundation of hope, a rooting place for growth, and a field of action which has been cleared of the contradictions and doubts which bewilder even those who long to be of some use to their fellows.

But what if, in this cycle, the only reliable matrix for action should turn out to be a *fluid* medium? That the stabilities—the *relative* stabilities—which can serve as resource for human beings lie in the dynamics of a certain level of self-understanding, and of the human heart generally? In a time of movement, there can be no static resting-place, but only the unstable equilibrium achieved by life in motion—moving toward a goal.

And so it is that the longing for peace will not be satisfied save in the terms that peace can be made, these days. It is the peace which enables men not only to hear, but to say to themselves: "The ocean of life washes to our feet and away again, things that are both hard to lose and unpleasant to welcome, yet they all belong to life; all come from the Great Self that is never moved. So lean back on the Self—be like the great bed of the ocean that is never moved though storms may ruffle the surface."

To find the bed of the ocean in oneself, and not to take flight—this is the task of every Arjuna, wherever the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune may find him. To discover "reasons" and "explanations" for one's pain is always possible, but never needful—not necessary, in the sense that a cataloguing of the disasters of the Kali Yuga would indeed become an endless project, and their personifications as numerous and as deceptive as all the wiles of Mara, to which they are no doubt related.

To stand as a rock is what is required; and to stand not for oneself alone, but also for those who, through karmic situation, have little or no testimony to the fact that an inner, motionless center exists in every man, and may be found. Very few indeed have command of the spectacle of karmic retribution as seen from the other side of Life, making them able to say, as Mr. Judge wrote:

> *We must some day be able to stand any shock,* and to get ready for that time we must be triumphant now over some smaller things. Among others is the very position you and I are now in; that is, standing our ground and feeling ourselves so much and so awfully alone. But we know that They have left us a commandment. That we keep, although now and then objects, senses, men, and time conspire to show us that Masters laugh at us. It is all a delusion. It is only one consequence of our past Karma now burning itself out before our eyes. The whole phantasmagoria is only a picture thrown up against the Screen of Time by the mighty magic of Prakriti (Nature).

Then he speaks of, not the scene, but certain of the actors:

> But noble hearts still walk here, fighting over again the ancient fight. They seek each other, so as to be of mutual help. We will not fail them. To fail would be nothing, but to stop working for Humanity and Brotherhood would be awful. We cannot; we will not. Yet we have not a clear road. No, it is not clear. I am content if I can see the next step in advance, only. You seek *The Warrior.* He is here, somewhere. No one can find him for you. You must do that. Still He fights on. No doubt He sees you and tries to make you see Him. Still he fights on and on.

February is the month which recalls great patriots of the United States, by reason of their birthdays, and reminds also of Thomas Paine, through natural association. There is the strong quality of heroism in these memories, and of the steadfastness of brave leaders who, as we know them, were unfaltering throughout the darkest hours. These men had for their companions little more than their own bright intuition and a few companions in whom a similar strength and vision had been born. What was then a practical embodiment of issues in historical circumstances, bringing from the best men of that time ringing expression of principle and valiant endurance of odds, is now the same great war, but at another level of man's being. A characterization of this change is given by Mr. Judge in his *Notes on The Bhagavad-Gita.* Speaking of the law of sacrifice known well to the ancients, and to some extent to those in whom an ancient wisdom still survives, he wrote:

> With the culmination of the dark age it was, however, natural that the last vestige of sacrifice should disappear. On the ruins of the altar has arisen the temple of the lower self, the shrine of the personal idea. In Europe individualism is somewhat tempered by various monarchical forms of government which do not by any means cure the evil; and in America, being totally unrestrained and forming in fact the basis of independence here, it has culminated. Its bad effects—vaguely as yet shadowing the horizon—might have been avoided if the doctrines of the Wisdom-Religion had been also believed in by the founders of the republic.

To see in collective human nature the focus of the weakness of the age, and to find in higher reaches of being the strength to set going other currents of action, and by these means to give space to a new sense of order, confidence to a new meaning in human relations, and to fire up a new recognition of the potentialities of all men —these may be the consequences of a deeper realization of the self. And they may appear more rapidly than now seems possible, under the conditions of an accelerated cycle of human development.

There is a sense in which the flow of progress in the awakening of hearts and the opening of minds will be able to create, in time, an ideal of peace which no longer depends upon a fixed or settled physical condition, and requires no static institutions. Growth, too, it may be found, has its natural intervals of peace—sometimes called "plateaus of learning." And the balance achieved by men in whom there has taken place a fuller incarnation of Manas is a balance in relation to the lively course of their own actions and motions, which may be likened to the gyroscopic principle of equilibrium which rights itself regardless of the irregularity in external conditions. Such peace comes from within—"thy body agitated, thy mind tranquil, thy soul as limpid as a mountain lake."

It is by such means, surely, that the nature of the cycle will be transformed, and that the inner longings of the world are served by a process of self-discovery and self-control, begun by the few who resolve to become both the companions of the wise and the friends and brothers of the many.

WORLD-IMPROVEMENT OR WORLD-DELIVERANCE?

> You yourself must make an effort. The Tathagatas are only preachers.—If a man find no prudent companion, let him walk alone like a king who has left his conquered country behind. It is better to live alone; there is no companionship with the *fools*. Let a man walk alone: let him commit no sin, with few wishes—like an elephant in the forest.
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> —*Dhammapada; Sutta Nipata*

To the Editor of *Lucifer*:

A very important paragraph which you wrote in No. 3 of your *Revue Théosophique,* published in Paris, May 21st 1889 (pp. 6 and 7), has caused very serious doubts in the minds of some of your readers in Germany—doubts, probably caused by our misunderstanding you or by your shortness of expression. Will you permit me to state our view of the case, and will you have the kindness to give us on this basis your opinion of it publicly, perhaps in *Lucifer?*

You were speaking of Indian "yogis" and European "saints" and said:

> La sagesse orientale[1] nous apprend que le *yogi* Indou qui s'isole dans une forêt impénétrable, ainsi que *l'hermite* chrétien qui se retire, comme aux temps jadis, dans le désert, ne sont tous deux que des égoïstes accomplis. L'un, agit dans l'unique but de trouver dans l'essence une et nirvanique refuge contre la réincarnation; l'autre, dans le but de sauver son âme,—tous les deux ne pensent qu'à eux-mêmes. Leur motif est tout *personnel;* car, en admettant qu'ils atteignent le but, ne sont-ils pas comme le soldat poltron, qui déserte *l'armée* au moment de l'action, pour se préserver des balles? En s'isolant ainsi, ni le yogi, ni le *"saint,"* n'aident personne autre qu'eux-mêmes; ils se montrent, par contre, *profondément indifférents* au sort de *l'humanité* qu'ils *fuient* et *désertent.*

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1. The editor of *Lucifer* and the *Revue Théosophique,* pleads guilty to an ommission. She ought to have qualified, "la sagesse Orientale" [the wisdom of the East] by adding the adjective "esoterique" [esoteric].

NOTE.—Extracts from Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden's letter to H. P. Blavatsky, along with her remarks in full, were reprinted in THEOSOPHY 16:290. However, since the depth and import of H.P.B.'s comments show most clearly in contrast to his speculations, the entire article is here reprinted as it appeared in *Lucifer* for July, 1889.

[The wisdom of the East teaches that the Hindu yogi who isolates himself in an impenetrable forest, as well as the Christian *hermit* who, like in the days of old, retires into the desert, are both but accomplished egoists. One acts with the sole aim of finding release from rebirth in the one and nirvanic essence; the other with a view of saving his soul,—both think but of themselves. Their motive is entirely *personal;* because, granted they reach the goal, are they not like the cowardly soldier who deserts the *army* at the moment of action, to avoid being struck by the bullets? In thus isolating themselves, neither the yogi, nor the *"saint,"* help anybody but themselves; on the contrary, they show themselves *profoundly indifferent* to the fate of *mankind* which they *flee* from and *desert.*]

You do not plainly say what you expect a true sage to do; but further on you refer to our Lord, the Buddha, and to what *He* did. We readily accept His example as well as His teachings for our ideal rule; but from those stanzas I have quoted above, it appears, that what he expected his disciples to do, does not quite agree with what you seem to expect from them.[2]

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2. The Western disciples and followers of the Lord Buddha's ethics lay very little stress on the dead letter (and often fanciful) translations of Buddhist *Sutras* by European Orientalists. From such scholars as Messrs. Max Müller and Weber, down to the last amateur Orientalist who dabbles in Buddhism disfigured by translation and proudly boasts of his knowledge, no Sanskrit or Pali scholar has so far understood correctly that which is taught; witness Monier Williams' fallacious assumption that Buddha never taught anything *esoteric!* Therefore neither the *Dhammapada* nor the *Sutta Nipata* are an exception, nor a proof to us in their now mutilated and misunderstood text. Nagarjuna laid it down as a rule, that "every Buddha has both a revealed and a mystic doctrine." The "exoteric is for the multitudes and new disciples," to whom our correspondent evidently belongs. This plain truth was understood even by such a prejudiced scholar as the Rev. J. Edkins, who passed almost all his life in China studying Buddhism, and who says in his *Chinese Buddhism* (Ch. iii):

> The esoteric was for the Bodisattvas and advanced pupils, such as Kashiapa. It is not communicated in the form of definite language, and *could not,* therefore, *be transmitted by Anandas as definite doctrine among the Sutras.* Yet, *it is virtually contained* in the *Sutras.* For example, the "Sutra of the Lotus of the Good Law," which is regarded as containing the cream of the revealed doctrine, is to be viewed as a sort of original document *of the esoteric teaching, while it is in form exoteric.* [Italics are H.P.B.'s.]

Moreover we perceive that our learned correspondent has entirely misunderstood the fundamental idea in what we wrote in our May edi-

He taught that all the world, or the three worlds, in fact, every existence, is pain, or leading to pain and grief. World and existence is pain and evil *per se*. It is a mistake (avidya) to believe that desire can be satisfied. All worldly desires lead in the end to dissatisfaction, and the desire (the thirst) to live is the cause of all evil. Only those who are striving to deliver (to save or to redeem) themselves from all existence (from their thirst for existence), leading the "happy life" of a perfect bhikshu, only those are sages; only those attain nirvana and, when they die, paranirvana, which is absolute and changeless being.[3]

No doubt some sort of development or so-called improvement, evolution and involution, is going on in the world; but just for this reason the Buddha taught (like Krishna before him), that the world is, "unreality, maya, avidya." Every actual form of existence has *become*, has grown to be what it is; it will continue *changing* and will have an end, like it had a beginning as a form. *Absolute being* without "form" and "name," this alone is true reality, and is worth striving at for a real sage.[4]

Now what did our Lord, the Buddha, do and how did He live? He did not in any way try to *improve* the *world;* he did not strive to realise socialistic problems, to solve the labour question or to better the *worldly* affairs of the poor, nor the rich either; he did not meddle with science, he did not teach cosmology and such like;* quite on the contrary; he lived in the most *unworldly* manner, he begged for his food and taught his disciples to do the same; he left, and taught his disciples to leave, all worldly life and affairs, to give up their families and to remain homeless, like he did and like he lived himself.[5]

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* *Malunka Sutta* in Spence Hardy, "Manual of Buddhism," p. 375. *Saymuttaka Nikaya* at the end of the work (Vol. iii of "Phayre MS"; also *Cullavagga*, ix, 1, 4).

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torial, *Le Phare de l'Inconnu* in the *Revue Théosophique*. We protest against such an interpretation and will prove that it errs in the course of this article.

3. An exoteric and frequent mistake. Nirvana may be reached during man's life, and after his death in the Manvantara or life-kalpa he belongs to. *Paranirvana* ("beyond" Nirvana) is reached only when the Manvantara has closed and during the "night" of the Universe or *Pralaya*. Such is the esoteric teaching.

4. Just so, and this is the theosophical teaching.

5. Quite right again. But to live "like he lived himself" one has to remain *as an ascetic* among the multitudes, or the *world*, for 45 years.

Against this cannot be brought forward, that these are only the teachings of the Hinayana system and that perhaps the Mahayana of the Northern Buddhists is the only right one; for this latter lays even more stress than the former on the *self*-improvement and continued *retirement* from the world of the bhikshu, *until* he has reached the perfection of a Buddha. True, the Mahayana system says, that not *every* Arahat has already attained highest perfection; it distinguishes Cravanas, Tratykeabuddhas and Bodhisattvas, of whom the latter only are considered the true spiritual sons of the Buddha, who are to be Buddhas themselves in their final future life and who have already realised the highest state of ecstacy, the Bodhi state, which is next to Nirvana.

Until a bhikshu or arhat has sufficiently progressed in perfection and wisdom, "playing at" Buddha and fixing himself up as an example or as a teacher to the world, is likely not only to throw him entirely off his path, but also to cause annoyance to those who *are*

This argument, therefore, goes directly against our correspondent's main idea. That against which we protested in the criticized article was not the *ascetic life, i.e.,* the life of one entirely divorced, morally and mentally, from the world, the ever-changing *maya,* with its false deceptive pleasures, but the life of a *hermit,* useless to all and as useless to himself, in the long run; at any rate *entirely selfish.* We believe we rightly understand our learned critic in saying that the point of his letter lies in the appeal to the teaching and practice of the Lord Gautama Buddha in support of withdrawal and isolation from the world, as contrasted with an opposite course of conduct. And here it is where his mistake lies and he opens himself to a severer and more just criticism than that he would inflict on us.

The Lord Gautama was never a *hermit,* save during the first six years of his ascetic life, the time it took him to enter fully "on the Path." In the "Supplementary account of the three religions" (*San-Kiea-yi-su*) it is stated that in the *seventh* year of his exercises of abstinence and solitary meditation, Buddha thought, "I had better eat, lest the heretics should say that Nirvana is attained in famishing the body." Then he ate, sat for his transformation for six more days and on the seventh day of the second month obtained his first *Samadhi.* Then, having "attained the perfect view of the highest truth," he arose and went to Benares where he delivered his first discourses. From that time forward for nearly half a century, he *remained in the world,* teaching the world salvation. His first disciples were nearly all Upasakas (lay brothers), the neophytes being permitted to continue in their positions in social life and not even required to join the monastic community. And those who did, were generally sent by the Master, to travel and proselytize, instructing in the doctrine of the four miseries all those with whom they met.

truly qualified for such work and who *are* fit to serve as ideal examples for others. None of *us* is a Buddha, and I do not know which of us might be a Bodhisattva; not everyone *can* be one, and not everyone was by the Buddha himself expected to *become* one, as is clearly and repeatedly expressed in the Saddharma Pundarika, the principal Mahayana work.[6] Nevertheless, admitting for argument's sake, that we were somehow fit to serve as specimen sages for "the world" and to improve "humanity"—now what *can* and what *ought* we to do then?

We certainly can have nothing to do with humanity in the sense of the "world," nothing with *worldly affairs* and *their* improvement. What else should we do, than to be *"profondément indifférents"* to them, to *"fuir et déserter"* them? Is not this "army" which we are deserting, just that "humanity" which the Dhammapada rightly terms "the fools"; and is it not just that "worldly life" which our Lord taught us to quit? What else should we strive at then but to

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6. Our correspondent is too well read in Buddhist *Sutras* not to be aware of the existence of the esoteric system taught *precisely* in the *Yogacharya* or the contemplative Mahayana schools. And in that system the hermit or yogi life, except for a few years of preliminary teaching, *is strongly objected to* and called SELFISHNESS. Witness Buddha in those superb pages of *Light of Asia* (Book the Fifth) when arguing with and reprimanding the self-torturing Yogis, whom, "sadly eyeing," the Lord asks:

> ". . . . . Wherefore add ye ills to life
> Which is so evil?"

When told in answer that they stake brief agonies to gain the larger joys of Nirvana, what does He say? This:

> "Yet if they last
> A myriad years . . . . they fade at length,
> Those joys . . . . Speak! Do your Gods endure
> For ever, brothers?"
> "Nay," the Yogis said,
> "Only great Brahm endures; the Gods but live."

Now if our correspondent understood as he should, these lines rendered in blank verse, yet word for word as in the *Sutras*, he would have a better idea of the esoteric teaching than he now has; and, having understood it, he would not oppose what we said; for not only was self-torture, selfish solicitude, and life in the jungle simply for one's own salvation condemned in the *Mahayana* (in the real esoteric system, not the mutilated translations he reads) but even *renunciation of Nirvana for the sake of mankind* is preached therein. One of its fundamental laws is, that ordinary morality is insufficient to deliver one from re-

take "refuge against re-incarnation," refuge with the Buddha, his dharma and his sangha![7]

But we further think, that the Buddha—as in every other respect—was quite right also on this point, even if one considers it as a scientist, as an historian or as a psychologist, not as a bhikshu. What real and essential improvement of the "world" can be made? Perhaps in carrying out socialistic problems a state might be arrived at, where every human individual would be sufficiently cared for, so that he *could* addict more *spare* time to his spiritual self-improvement if he *wished* to do so; but if he does *not wish* to improve *himself,* the best social organization will not make or help him do so.

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birth; one has to practise the six Paramitas or cardinal virtues for it: 1. Charity, 2. Chastity, 3. Patience, 4. Industry, 5. Meditation, 6. Ingenuousness (or openness of heart, sincerity). And how can a *hermit* practise charity or industry if he runs away from man? Bodhisattvas, who, having fulfilled all the conditions of Buddhaship, have the right to forthwith enter Nirvana, prefer instead, out of unlimited pity for the suffering ignorant world, to renounce this state of bliss and become *Nirmanakayas.* They don the *Sambhogakaya* (the invisible body) in order to serve mankind, *i.e.,* to *live a sentient life after death* and suffer immensely at the sight of human miseries (most of which, being Karmic, they are not at liberty to relieve) for the sake of having a chance of inspiring a few with the desire of learning the truth and thus saving themselves. (By the bye, all that Schlagintweit and others have written about the Nirmanakaya body is erroneous.) Such is the true meaning of the Mahayana teaching. "I believe that not all the Buddhas enter Nirvana," says, among other things, the disciple of the Mahayana school in his address to "the Buddhas (or Bodhisattvas) of confession"—referring to this secret teaching.

7. The quotation with which our correspondent heads his letter *does not* bear the interpretation he puts upon it. No one acquainted with the spirit of the metaphors used in Buddhist philosophy would read it as Mr. Hübbe-Schleiden does. The man advised to walk "like a king who has left his conquered country behind," implies that he who has conquered his passions and for whom worldly *maya* exists no longer, need not lose his time in trying to convert those who will not believe in him, but had better leave them alone to their Karma; but it certainly does not mean that they are fools intellectually. Nor does it imply that the disciples should leave the world; "Our Lord" taught us as much as "the Lord Jesus" did, the "Lord Krishna" and other "Lords" all "Sons of God"—to quit the "worldly" life, not *men,* least of all suffering, ignorant Humanity. But surely neither, the Lord Gautama Buddha less than any one of the above enumerated, would have taught us the monstrous and selfish doctrine of remaining *"profondément indifférents"* [profoundly indifferent] to the woes and miseries of mankind, or to *desert*

On the contrary, my own experience, at least, is just the reverse. The spiritually or rather mystically highest developed living human individual I know is a poor common weaver and moreover consumptive, who was until lately in such a position employed in a cotton-mill, that he was as much treated as a dog, like most labourers are, by their joint-stock employers. Still this man is in his inner life quite independent of his worldly misery; his heavenly or rather divine peace and satisfaction is at any time his refuge, and no one can rob him of that. He fears no death, no hunger, no pain, no want, no injustice, no cruelty![8]

You will concede, I suppose, that Karma is not originated by external causes, but only by each individual for himself. Anyone who has made himself fit for and worthy of a good opportunity, will surely find it; and if you put another unworthy one into the very best of circumstances, he will not avail himself of them properly; they will rather serve *him* to draw him down into the mire which is his delight.

But perhaps you reply: it is, nevertheless, our duty to create as many good opportunities as we can, for humanity in general, that all

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those who cry daily and hourly for help to us, more favoured than they. This is an outrageously selfish and cruel system of life, by whomsoever adopted! It is neither Buddhistic, nor Christian, nor theosophical, but the nightmare of a doctrine of the worst schools of Pessimism, such as would be probably discountenanced by Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann themselves!

Our critic sees in the "army" of Humanity—those "fools" that the *Dhammapada* alludes to. We are sorry to find him calling himself *names*, as we suppose he still belongs to Humanity, whether he likes it or not. And if he tells us in the exuberance of his modesty that he is quite prepared to fall under the flattering category, then we answer that no true Buddhist ought, agreeably to the Dhammapadic injunctions, to accept "companionship" with him. This does not promise him a very brilliant future with "the Buddha, his dharma and his Sangha," To call the whole of Humanity "fools" is a risky thing, anyhow; to treat as such that portion of mankind which groans and suffers under the burden of its national and individual Karma, and refuse it, under this pretext, help and sympathy—is positively revolting. He who does not say with the Master: "Mercy alone opens the gate to save the whole race of mankind" is unworthy of that Master.

8. And yet this man lives *in*, and with the world, which fact does not prevent his *inner* "Buddhaship"; *nor* shall he ever be called a "deserter" and a coward, epithets which he would richly deserve had he abandoned

those who are worthy of them, might find them all the sooner. Quite right! we fully agree and we are certainly doing our best in this respect. But will this improve the *spiritual* welfare of "humanity"? Never, not by an atom, we think. Humanity, as a *whole,* will always remain comparatively the same "fools," which they have always been. Suppose we had succeeded in establishing an ideal organization of mankind, do you think these "fools" would be any the wiser by it, or any the more satisfied and happy?[9] Certainly not, they would always invent new wants, new pretensions, new claims; the "world" will for ever go on striving for "worldly perfection" only. Our present social organization is greatly improved on the system of the middle-ages: still, is our present time any the happier, any the more satisfied than our ancestors have been at the time of the Niebelunge or of King Arthur? I think, if there has been any change in satisfaction, it was for the worse; our present time is more greedy and less content than any former age. Whoever expects his *self*-improvement by means of any *world*-improvement or any external means and causes, has yet to be sorely undeceived; and happy for him if this experience will come to him before the *end* of his present life!

A very clever modern philosopher has invented the theory that the best plan to get rid of this misery of the "world," would be our giving ourselves up to it the best we could, in order to hasten this evil process to its early end.—Vain hope! Avidya is as endless as it is beginningless. A universe has a beginning and has an end, but others will begin and end after it, just like one day follows the other; and as there has been an endless series of worlds before, thus will there be an endless series afterwards. Causality can never have had a beginning nor can it have an end. And every "world," that will ever be, will always be "world," that is pain and "evil."[10]

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his wife and family, instead of working *for them,* not for his own "dear" self.

9. This is no business of ours, but that of their respective Karma. On this principle we should have to deny to every starving wretch a piece of bread, because, forsooth, he will be just as hungry tomorrow?

10. And therefore, *Sauve qui peut* [disorderly retreat], is our correspondent's motto? Had the—

> All Honoured, Wisest, Best, most Pitiful,
> The Teacher of Nirvana, and the Law

taught the heartless principle *Après moi le déluge* [after me the deluge]. I do not think that the learned editor of the *Sphinx* would have had

Therefore, like Karma, also *deliverance,* redemption or salvation (from the world) can never be any otherwise than *"personal,"* or let us rather say "individual." The world, of course, can never be delivered from itself, from the "world," from pain and evil. And *no one* can be delivered therefrom by anyone else.—You certainly do not teach vicarious atonement! Or, *can* anyone save his neighbour? Can one apple make ripe another apple hanging next to it?[11]

Now what else can we do but live the "happy life" of bhikshus without wants, without pretensions, without desires? And if our good example calls or draws to us others who seek for the same happiness, then we try to teach them the best we can. But this is another rather doubtful question to us! Not only are we not properly fit to teach, but if we were, we require proper persons to be taught, persons who are not only willing, but who are also fit to listen to us.[12]

In spite of all these difficulties and quite conscious of our own incompetency, we nevertheless venture now to publish books and journals, in which we try to explain Indian religio-philosophy to the best of our understanding. Thus every one who has eyes may read it, and who has ears may hear it—if his good Karma is ripening!

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much of a chance of being converted to Buddhism as he is now. Very true that his Buddhism seems to be no better than the exoteric dry and half-broken rind, of European fabrication, of that grand fruit of altruistic mercy, and pity for all that lives—real Eastern Buddhism and especially its esoteric doctrines.

11. No; but the apple can either screen its neighbour from the sun, and, depriving it of its share of light and heat, prevent its ripening, or sharing with it the dangers from worms and the urchin's hand, thus diminish that danger by one half. As to Karma this is again a misconception. There is such a thing as a *national,* besides a personal or *individual* Karma in this world. But our correspondent seems to have either never heard of it, or misunderstood once more, in his own way.

12. *Fais que dois, advienne que pourra* [do your duty, come what may]. When did the Lord Buddha make a preliminary selection in his audiences? Did he not agreeably to allegory and History, preach and convert demons and gods, bad and good men? Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden seems more Catholic than the Pope, more prim than an old-fashioned English housewife, and certainly more squeamish than Lord Buddha ever was. "Teach vicarious atonement?" certainly we do not. But it is safer and (more modest at any rate) to make too much of one's neighbours and fellow-men than to look at every one as on so much dirt under one's feet. If I am a fool, it is no reason why I should see a fool in everyone else. We leave to our critic the difficult task of discerning who is,

What else do you expect *us agnams* to do?[13] Are we not rather to be blamed already, that we undertake such work, for which we—*not* being Buddhas, nor even Bodisattvas—are as badly qualified as a recruit is fit to serve as general field-marshal. And if you cannot find fault with us, can you say that those "yogis" or "saints" whom you seem to blame in your above passage, were in a better position and could have done more? If, however, they were, *what* ought they to have done?

We are fully aware that a true Buddhist and a sage, or—if you like—theosophist, must always be every inch an *altruist*. And when we are acting altruistically, it is perhaps no bad sign in regard to what we some day might *become;* but every thing at its proper time: where competency does not keep pace with altruism in development and in display, it might do more harm than good. Thus we feel even not quite sure whether our conscience ought not to blame us for our well-intended, but pert work; and the only excuse we can find for our thus giving way to the promptings of our heart is, that those persons who really might be properly qualified, do *not* come forward, do *not* help us, do *not do* this evidently necessary work![14]

HÜBBE-SCHLEIDEN

Neuhausen, *Munich,* June 1st, 1889

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and who *is not* fit to listen to us, and, in the absence of positive proof, prefer postulating that every man has a responsive chord in his nature that will vibrate and respond to words of kindness and of truth.

13. We expect you not to regard everyone else as an *"agnam"*—*if* by this word an *ignoramus* is meant. To help to deliver the world from the curse of *Avidya* (ignorance) we have only to learn from those who know more than we do, and teach those who know less. This is just the object we have in view in spreading theosophical literature and trying to explain "Indian *religio*-philosophy."

14. An apocalyptic utterance this. I think, however, that I dimly understand. Those who are "properly qualified, do *not* come forward, do *not* help us, do *not do* this evidently necessary work." Don't THEY? How *does* our pessimistic correspondent *know?* I "guess" and "surmise" that they do, and very much so. For had the T.S. and its members been left to their own fate and Karma, there would not be much of it left today, under the relentless persecutions, slander, scandals, purposely set on foot, and the malicious hatred of our enemies—*open* and *secret*.

H. P. BLAVATSKY

PERCEPTION THROUGH MEDITATION

MEDITATION is the practice by means of which the power of direct perception can be aroused. This practice is not itself the power of direct perception, no more than a man's nerves are his muscles; and if one thinks his arms are moved by the muscles alone, he has but to temporarily stupefy the nerves to find that the muscles, wonderful and essential as they may be, are but one of three essentials to the least flection of the members. So with meditation: it is a mode of arriving at direct perception.

Meditation, in the sense we are using it, means paying no attention whatever to what anybody *says,* because whatever is said is but a description, a statement *about* some experience; and it is plain that a statement in regard to an experience is not the experience. So, to get at the meaning of meditation, we have to withdraw from that which sees differences and similarities—the man of sense. We have also to withdraw from that part of our nature which argues over the relation and meaning of similarities and differences, seeking out that which goes beyond any and all statements made from any source, no matter how high or truthful, which ponders on the essential fabric, the real being of that concerning which the statement is made.

If a man will hold in his mind the simple statement that the *source* from which everything proceeds, and of which everything is a manifestation, is of necessity ONE—if he holds that statement before him, something eventually takes place which may seem like a miracle: he sees for himself, once and forever, that the statement is true! No Sinaic thunder could make him lose his certainty of that fact; no menace of unpropitious circumstance could hide from his sight that great and eternal fact. But unless a man goes past the sense state, past the argumentative state, and past the seeking for happiness or dodging unhappiness, and enters the meditative state where the mind dwells without variableness or shadow of turning upon one single idea, this fundamental truth of Theosophy will forever remain to him a thing only to be believed or disbelieved.

This is certainly what the *Gita* calls "spiritual knowledge"—seeing with the eye of spirit. This is direct perception, as opposed to seeing with the eye of the mind, dependent on stereoptic perception, or seeing with the eye of sense, reflected perception. To rise to meditation, then, is to see the answer in ourselves—not in a book, not in another person's statement, not in circumstances.

Turning inward to the field of meditation, we find back of all our energies, however spent, whether conserved or dissipated, an inner power or potency, the well-spring from which our energies flow like a river; it is this spring that is meant by the word "faith." Back of our energies, howsoever expended, lies our faith in *something*.

Any man can see for himself that much of the time his real faith is in the power of evil. If his real faith were not in the power of evil, he would make a greater struggle to do good. If his real faith were not in the power of evil, why should he fear death and disease? Why should he fear loss of reputation or money? Why should he fear anything, past or present or to come? Let a man answer, not to any prying priest, but to the only confessional there is for the spiritual being—let a man answer in his own heart the question: What God am I worshiping? Then if he sees, as most of us can see, that he is worshiping the God of fear, let him destroy that God.

Any man may find that he has the power to destroy the God of evil, the God of fear. How? By rising above good and evil through meditation. Good and evil are but the two aspects of the operation of the law of our own being. Let a man rise above the plane of hate, become evoker of the law of his own being, and then he can see that he lives in a unitary universe, in spite of all diversity; it is an orderly universe, in spite of all disorder; it is a just universe, in spite of all inequity. Then let him rely upon his own godhood, upon his own divinity, upon his own power to do that which he sees to be true, regardless of all the power of evil that may be visible or invisible.

We need to revise our conception of the Source of things. We need to revise our conception of ourselves. We need to see that there is that in us which, once we have seen a thing to be wrong, will never permit us to do it again without an inward revolt. That is the invocation of the Voice of the Silence. That is the direct perception, through meditation, of the divine, regenerating power within ourselves. We have but to learn to use it.

THE WISDOM RELIGION

The Mysteries III

THE reason why in every age so little has been generally known of the mysteries of initiation, is twofold. The first has already been explained by more than one author, and lies in the terrible penalty following the least indiscretion. The second, is the superhuman difficulties and even dangers which the daring candidate of old had to encounter, and either conquer, or die in the attempt, when, what is still worse, he did not lose his reason. There was no real danger to him whose mind had become thoroughly spiritualized, and so prepared for every terrific sight. He who fully recognized the power of his immortal spirit, and never doubted for one moment its omnipotent protection, had naught to fear. But woe to the candidate in whom the slightest physical fear—sickly child of matter—made him lose sight and faith in his own invulnerability. He who was not wholly confident of his moral fitness to accept the burden of these tremendous secrets was doomed.

The *Talmud* gives the story of the four Tanaïm, who are made, in allegorical terms, to enter into *the garden of delights; i.e.*, to be initiated into the occult and final science.

"According to the teaching of our holy masters the names of the four who entered the garden of delight, are: Ben Asai, Ben Zoma, Acher, and Rabbi Akiba. . . .

"Ben Asai looked and—lost his sight.

"Ben Zoma looked and—lost his reason.

"Acher made depredations in the plantation" (mixed up the whole and failed). "But Akiba, who had entered in peace, came out of it in peace, for the saint whose name be blessed had said, 'This old man is worthy of serving us with glory'."

"The learned commentators of the *Talmud*, the Rabbis of the synagogue, explain that the *garden of delight*, in which those four personages are made to enter, is but that mysterious science, the

NOTE.—This series began in the November, 1966, issue. Sources for this installment are: *Isis* II, 118-22, 138, 145-6; *Isis* I, 518-19.

most terrible of sciences *for weak intellects, which it leads directly to insanity,"* says A. Franck, in his *Kabbala.* It is not the pure at heart and he who studies but with a view to perfecting himself and so more easily acquiring the promised immortality, who need have any fear; but rather he who makes of the science of sciences a sinful pretext for worldly motives, who should tremble. *The latter will never withstand the kabalistic evocations of the supreme initiation.*

The licentious performances of the thousand and one early Christian sects, may be criticised by partial commentators as well as the ancient Eleusinian and other rites. But why should they incur the blame of the theologians, the Christians, when their own "Mysteries" of "the divine incarnation with Joseph, Mary, and the angel" in a sacred *trilogue* used to be enacted in more than one country, and were famous at one time in Spain and Southern France? Later, they fell like many other once secret rites into the hands of the populace. It is but a few years since, during every Christmas week, Punch-and-Judy boxes, containing the above named personages, an additional display of the infant Jesus in his manger, were carried about the country in Poland and Southern Russia. They were called *Kaliadovki,* a word the correct etymology of which we are unable to give unless it is from the verb *Kaliadovât,* a word that we as willingly abandon to learned philologists. We have seen this show in our days of childhood. We remember the three king-Magi represented by three dolls in powdered wigs and colored tights; and it is from recollecting the simple, profound veneration depicted on the faces of the pious audience, that we can the more readily appreciate the honest and just remark by the editor, in the introduction to the *Eleusinian Mysteries,* who says: "It is ignorance which leads to profanation. Men ridicule what they do not properly understand. . . . The undercurrent of this world is set toward one goal; and inside of human credulity—call it human weakness, if you please—is a power almost infinite, a holy faith capable of apprehending the supremest truths of all existence."

If that abstract sentiment called *Christian charity* prevailed in the Church, we would be well content to leave all this unsaid. We have no quarrel with Christians whose faith is sincere and whose practice coincides with their profession. But with an arrogant, dogmatic, and dishonest clergy, we have nothing to do except to see the ancient philosophy—antagonized by modern theology in its puny offspring —Spiritualism—defended and righted so far as we are able, so that

its grandeur and sufficiency may be thoroughly displayed. It is not alone for the esoteric philosophy that we fight; nor for any modern system of moral philosophy, but for the inalienable right of private judgment, and especially for the ennobling idea of a future life of activity and accountability.

We eagerly applaud such commentators as Godfrey Higgins, Inman, Payne Knight, King, Dunlap, and Dr. Newton, however much they disagree with our own mystical views, for their diligence is constantly being rewarded by fresh discoveries of the Pagan paternity of Christian symbols. But otherwise, all these learned works are useless. Their researches only cover half the ground. Lacking the true key of interpretation they see the symbols only in a physical aspect. They have no password to cause the gates of mystery to swing open; and ancient spiritual philosophy is to them a closed book. Diametrically opposed though they be to the clergy in their ideas respecting it, in the way of interpretation they do little more than their opponents for a questioning public. Their labors tend to strengthen materialism as those of the clergy, especially the Romish clergy, do to cultivate belief in diabolism.

If the study of Hermetic philosophy held out no other hope of reward, it would be more than enough to know that by it we may learn with what perfection of justice the world is governed. A sermon upon this text is preached by every page of history. Among all there is not one that conveys a deeper moral than the case of the Roman Church. The divine law of compensation was never more strikingly exemplified than in the fact that by her own act she has deprived herself of the only possible key to her own religious mysteries. The assumption of Godfrey Higgins that there are two doctrines maintained in the Roman Church, one for the masses and the other—the esoteric—for the "perfect," or the initiates, as in the ancient Mysteries, appears to us unwarranted and rather fantastic. They have lost the key, we repeat; otherwise no terrestrial power could have prostrated her, and except a superficial knowledge of the means of producing "miracles," her clergy can in no way be compared in their wisdom with the hierophants of old.

In burning the works of the theurgists; in proscribing those who affect their study; in affixing the stigma of demonolatry to magic in general, Rome has left her exoteric worship and *Bible* to be helplessly riddled by every free-thinker, her sexual emblems to be identified with coarseness, and her priests to unwittingly turn magicians

and even sorcerers in their exorcisms, which are but necromantic evocations. Thus retribution, by the exquisite adjustment of divine law, is made to overtake this scheme of cruelty, injustice, and bigotry, through her own suicidal acts.

True philosophy and divine truth are convertible terms. A religion which dreads the light cannot be a religion based on either truth or philosophy—hence, it must be false. The ancient Mysteries were mysteries to the profane only, whom the hierophant never sought nor would accept as proselytes; to the initiates the Mysteries became explained as soon as the final veil was withdrawn. No mind like that of Pythagoras or Plato would have contented itself with an unfathomable and incomprehensible mystery, like that of the Christian dogma. There can be but one truth, for two small truths on the same subject can but constitute one great error. Among thousands of exoteric or popular conflicting religions which have been propagated since the days when the first men were enabled to interchange their ideas, not a nation, not a people, nor the most abject tribe, but after their own fashion has believed in an Unseen God, the First Cause of unerring and immutable laws, and in the immortality of our spirit. No creed, no false philosophy, no religious exaggerations, could ever destroy that feeling. It must, therefore, be based upon an absolute truth. On the other hand, every one of the numberless religions and religious sects views the Deity after its own fashion; and, fathering on the unknown its own speculations, it enforces these purely human outgrowths of overheated imagination on the ignorant masses, and calls them "revelation." As the dogmas of every religion and sect often differ radically, they cannot be *true*. And if untrue, what are they?

"The greatest curse to a nation," remarks Dr. Inman, "is not *a bad religion*, but a form of faith which prevents manly inquiry. I know of no nation of old that was priest-ridden which did not fall under the swords of those who did not care for hierarchs. . . . The greatest danger is to be feared from those ecclesiastics who wink at vice, and encourage it as a means whereby they can gain power over their votaries. So long as every man does to other men as he would that they should do to him, and *allows no one to interfere between him and his Maker*, all will go well with the world."

At Byblos, the neophytes as well as the hierophants were, after participating in the Mysteries, obliged to fast and remain in solitude for some time. There was strict fasting and preparation before as

well as after the Bacchic, Adonian, and Eleusinian orgies; and Herodotus hints, with fear and veneration about the LAKE of Bacchus, in which "they (the priests) made at night exhibitions of his life and sufferings." In the Mithraic sacrifices, during the initiation, a preliminary scene of death was simulated by the neophyte, and it preceded the scene showing him himself "being born again by the rite *of baptism.*" A portion of this ceremony is still enacted in the present day by the Masons, when the neophyte, as the Grand Master Abiff, lies dead, and is raised by the strong grip of the lion's paw.

In the Eleusinian and other Mysteries the participants were always divided into two classes, the *neophytes* and the *perfect.* The former were sometimes admitted to the preliminary initiation: the dramatic performance of Ceres, or the soul, descending to Hades.[1] But it was given only to the *"perfect"* to enjoy and learn the Mysteries of the divine *Elysium,* the celestial abode of the blessed; this Elysium being unquestionably the same as the "Kingdom of Heaven." To contradict or reject the above, would be merely to shut one's eyes to the truth.

The narrative of the Apostle Paul, in his second *Epistle to the Corinthians* (xii. 3, 4), has struck several scholars, well versed in the descriptions of the mystical rites of the initiation given by some classics, as alluding most undoubtedly to the final *Epopteia.* "I knew a certain man—*whether in body or outside of body,* I know not: God knoweth—who was rapt into Paradise, and heard things ineffable, *which it is not lawful for a man to repeat.*" These words have rarely, so far as we know, been regarded by commentators as an allusion to the beatific visions of an *"initiated"* seer. But the phraseology is unequivocal. These things *"which it is not lawful to repeat,"* are hinted at in the same words, and the reason for it assigned, is the same as that which we find repeatedly expressed by Plato, Proclus, Iamblichus, Herodotus, and other classics. "We speak WISDOM only among them who are PERFECT," says Paul; the plain and undeniable translation of the sentence being: "We speak of the profounder (or final) esoteric doctrines of the Mysteries (which were denominated *wisdom*) only among them who are *initiated.*" "They related to the human soul, its divine parentage, its supposed degradation from its

1. This descent to Hades signified the inevitable fate of each soul to be united for a time with a terrestrial body. This union, or dark prospect for the soul to find itself imprisoned within the dark tenement of a body, was considered by all the ancient philosophers, and is even by the modern Buddhists, as a punishment.

high estate by becoming connected with 'generation' or the physical world, its onward progress and restoration to God by regenerations or . . . transmigrations." So in relation to the "man who was rapt into Paradise"—and who was evidently Paul himself—the Christian word Paradise having replaced that of Elysium. To complete the proof, we might recall the words of Plato, given elsewhere, which show that before an initiate could see the gods in their purest light, he had to become *liberated* from his body; *i.e.*, to separate his astral soul from it. Apuleius also describes his initiation into the Mysteries in the same way: "I approached the confines of death; and, having trodden on the threshold of Proserpina, returned, having been carried through all the elements. In the depths of midnight I saw the sun glittering with a splendid light, together with *the infernal and supernal gods,* and to those divinities approaching, I paid the tribute of devout adoration."

The date of the hundreds of pyramids in the Valley of the Nile is impossible to fix by any of the rules of modern science; but Herodotus informs us that each successive king erected one to commemorate his reign, and serve as his sepulchre. But, Herodotus did not tell all, although he knew that the *real* purpose of the pyramid was very different from that which he assigns to it. Were it not for his religious scruples, he might have added that, externally, it symbolized the creative principle of nature, and illustrated also the principles of geometry, mathematics, astrology, and astronomy. Internally, it was a majestic fane, in whose sombre recesses were performed the Mysteries, and whole walls had often witnessed the initiation-scenes of members of the royal family. The porphyry sarcophagus, which Professor Piazzi Smyth, Astronomer Royal of Scotland, degrades into a corn-bin, was the *baptismal font,* upon emerging from which, the neophyte was "born again," and became an *adept.*

Belief quickly becomes conviction of possessing certain knowledge, and that stands in the way of gaining more knowledge. Trust is a deep personal commitment.

—EDITH HAMILTON

YOUTH FORUM

In a world rife with rebellion, war and social revolt, how might Theosophy help one to understand the causes behind these conditions?

If one's description of the rebel is simply that he is a person who resists conventionality, authority, or flouts traditions, then discussion of revolution or rebellion is limited to select historical conditions or those pertaining to radical minority groups or individuals. We are often encouraged to believe that dissent or revolt is a special event in the lives of people, and to consider it as such we disregard its possible meanings. But are the questions concerning revolutionary feelings and change really that simple? What is a rebel? we ask, and might answer, as did Albert Camus, that he is a man who says "No." Yet in his refusal there is an affirmation: he has drawn a line between something in himself and the external world. From this moment he is no longer a "thing." His existence, with at least certain rights, has been affirmed. The oppressive character of some segment of life hasn't the same absolute control over him as it did when he remained silent or submitted to the particular infringement which he now resists.

Growth in human awareness is, much of the time, an exercise in discrimination—if only for a moment. It both affirms and denies some things. Even the diffuse focus of issues in the student movement, for example, at the University of California at Berkeley, simultaneously affirmed a deeper conception of what it means to "get an education" and denied that major decisions affecting college education should be in the hands of administrators who were more politicians than teachers. Freedom, in such a context of growth, is a corollary of choice, and choice a corollary of will. The tenacity of a man's life manifests itself, as do all the qualities of being human, when one affirms or demands some form of justice or the right *to be*. The effects of committing one's self to a position are mostly unpredictable, and result both from one's longings and from insight in human affairs.

What we may be fairly certain of is that in an age of anxiety, contradiction, hypocrisy, and failing vision—in this "fecund bed of contrasting virtues," as H. P. Blavatsky says in "The Fall of Ideals" —there will appear agonized expressions of revolutionary fervor. Its most devastating forms (which often receive disproportionate publicity) may appear, as H.P.B. says further along in her article, as the "germs which ultimately developed into All-denying protestators, Atheists, Nihilists, and Anarchists, men of the Terror." She continues:

> Bad, violent, criminal some of them may be, yet no one of them could stand as the copy of Satan; but taking this heart-broken, hopeless, embittered portion of humanity in their collectivity, they are just Satan himself; for he is the ideal synthesis of all discordant forces and each separate human vice or passion is but an atom of his totality. In the very depths of the heart of this HUMAN Satanic totality burns the divine spark, all negations notwithstanding. It is called LOVE FOR HUMANITY, an ardent aspiration for a universal reign of Justice—hence a latent desire for light, harmony and goodness.

There is, in a passage such as this, extraordinary depth and symmetry—a kind of philosophical alembic separating contradictory facts of experience into various elements of ideal motive and their compromised objective effects. There are also, here, principles of regeneration, although they are obscured at times by the nihilistic temper. In H.P.B.'s remarks we have an explanation which details for us the symmetries of extreme revolutionary action. But perhaps it is presumptuous to rush to these comments too quickly, for numerous implicit questions and answers precede her conclusions.

Although we may say that some affirmative faith exists beneath the surface of all denial and rejection, still there exist the complexities of rationalizing that faith. In moments of crisis, for example, dialogue and rhetoric easily become bound to moral polemics and nationalistic zeal, blinding one to the subtleties which are always present in human life. When this happens the most apparent fact seems to be a contradiction in the means used to achieve ideal ends. Fyodor Dostoyevsky sets this problem in unforgettable terms in *The Brothers Karamazov*. His tragic hero, Ivan, challenges his brother, Aloysha:

> "Imagine that you are creating a fabric of human destiny with the object of making men happy in the end, giving them peace and rest at last, but that it was essential and inevitable

to torture to death only one tiny creature—that baby beating its breast with its fist, for instance—and to found that edifice on its unavenged tears, would you consent to be the architect on those conditions? Tell me, and tell me the truth."

"No, I wouldn't consent," said Aloysha softly.

"And can you admit the idea that men for whom you are building it would agree to accept their happiness on the foundation of the unexpiated blood of a little victim? and accepting it would remain happy for ever?"

Ennui and moral evasion may cause one to disregard Ivan's question. But it cannot be escaped—someone else will answer it for us, in our name, as happens every day in every war. The answers to Ivan's question may range from that of a philosophical pacifist, exemplified by a man like Gandhi, to Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor who abolished freedom in order to make men happy.

(*To be continued*)

"Present Imperatives"

The danger so well described by the philosopher Whitehead—the danger that events might outrun man and leave him a panting and helpless anachronism—is by now much more than a figure of speech. We have leaped centuries ahead in inventing a new world to live in, but as yet we have an inadequate conception of our own part in that world. We have surrounded and confounded ourselves with gaps—gaps between revolutionary science and evolutionary anthropology, between cosmic gadgets and human wisdom, between intellect and conscience. The clash between knowledge and ethics that Henry Thomas Buckle foresaw a century ago is now more than a mere skirmish.

Our generation lacks a philosophy of vital participation in the world community. How much emphasis is there on the most important science of all—the science of interrelationships of knowledge—that critical area beyond compartmentalization where knowledge must be integrated in order to have proper meaning? Is there enough of a sense of individual responsibility for group decision? Is the individual equipped to appraise the news and to see beyond the news, to see events against a broad historical flow? For ultimate objectives have suddenly become present imperatives; they will be faced and attained in our time or they may not be attained at all.

—Norman Cousins

on the lookout

Theosophist Unaware?

"You do what you must do, what seems right, what would make you despise yourself if you didn't do. Or you do it because you love somebody, or a lot of people, so much that you just have to do it. Then when things happen, you stay as steady as you can and that's that." So wrote Lillian Smith in a letter shortly before her death on Sept. 28, 1966. Of this distinguished novelist's life and work, George P. Brockway, of W. W. Norton, her publishers, writes (*Saturday Review,* Oct. 22, 1966):

> Everything Lillian Smith wrote was informed by a profound psychological insight that was at the same time a profound moral insight. In *Killers of the Dream* she put it this way: "I began to understand slowly at first, but more clearly as the years passed, that the warped, distorted frame we have put around every Negro child from birth is around every white child also. Each is on a different side of the frame but each is pinioned there. And I knew that what cruelly shapes and cripples the personality of one is as cruelly shaping and crippling the personality of the other."
>
> This is an extraordinarily powerful idea. She herself would not have said so; but it is nothing less than an extension, a clarification, a reinforcement, indeed (it is not too much to say) an authorization of the Golden Rule. No longer a sort of balance between competing self-interests, the Rule comes to read: What I do to others, I do to myself. The Golden Rule permits one to hope that one's fellow man may not be able to return a disfavor; as restated it is inexorable: If I diminish my neighbor, I diminish myself; we are both pinioned to the same frame.

Milestones on Man's Journey

Many of Miss Smith's nearly seventy years were dedicated to efforts to ameliorate the conditions of the Negroes in the South, and much of her writing was devoted to an attempt to awaken the hearts and minds of all whites to the dangers inherent in the assumption of "white supremacy." Her basic theme, human dignity for all, was iterated and reiterated in novels, essays, lectures. At her request,

passages from her book *The Journey* were read at the memorial service held for her on Sept. 30, the concluding paragraph of which reads:

> To believe in something not yet proved and to underwrite it with our lives; it is the only way we can leave the future open. Man, surrounded by facts, permitting himself no surmise, no intuitive flash, no great hypothesis, no risk, is in a locked cell. Ignorance cannot seal the mind and imagination more surely. To find the point where hypothesis and fact meet; the delicate equilibrium between dream and reality; the place where fantasy and earthy things are metamorphosed into a work of art; the hour when faith in the future becomes knowledge of the past; to lay down one's powers for others in need; to shake off the old ordeal and get ready for the new; to question, knowing that never can the full answer be found; to accept uncertainties quietly, even our incomplete knowledge of God: this is what man's journey is about, I think.

"Once that a student abandons the old and trodden highway of routine," H.P.B. wrote, "and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought—Godward—he is a Theosophist; an original thinker, a seeker after the eternal truth with 'an inspiration of his own' to solve the universal problems."

Religious Ferment Widespread

In Canada, as in England and the United States, discussions of Christian dogmas by clergymen make news. The lead article in *Maclean's* (Toronto, Aug. 6), titled "Is God Obsolete?" reports the extent of the unrest and the frankness of ministers in facing religious and social issues. A great many Canadians, says *Maclean's*, are indifferent to Christianity, but "regular churchgoers by the millions are aware that religion is undergoing an upheaval only a year or two old that is touching Christianity to its roots."

The conflict has moved into more orthodox pulpits in a negative way, showing itself principally in what ministers do *not* say— "hellfire, Jonah, and Thou Shalt Not have almost disappeared." The following statements by different ministers describe their dilemma:

> You preach to two congregations. Ministers are in a very difficult position, on a fence. They try to reach both the avant garde and those with old-time system of thinking. But they can't stay there in no-man's land much longer.
>
> * * *
>
> Facts well known to clergy and taught throughout theological seminaries now for at least the last 50 or 60 years are news to

> persons outside the theological world. There is a great gap between the pulpit and the pew in matters of religious knowledge and belief. This is because the clergy and the church have not been as honest as they should have been. They have not stated facts that might disturb faith. They have had one teaching for the informed and educated and another for the uninformed. . . . The time has come to close the gap.

Many Canadians expect that eventually various denominations will coalesce into three groups, fundamentalist, traditionalist, and liberals—the last "opting for a churchless fraternity with the ministers working as cab drivers or psychologists or coffee-house proprietors." Already several radical dissidents are candidly expressing objections to orthodox dogmas. All this turmoil, this willingness to "cut dead wood out of its ritual," suggests *Maclean's,* makes for a vital, living church—a "real church."

Sixteen Years Too Late

An item in the Los Angeles *Times* (Oct. 19, 1966) illustrates one of the more cogent reasons for abolition of the death penalty:

> A posthumous pardon was awarded Tuesday to Timothy Evans, hanged sixteen years ago for a crime—killing his baby daughter—which a judicial review last week found he probably did not commit. . . . The Home Secretary told the House of Commons he did not think it right to allow Evans' conviction to stand. To cheers from members of Parliament, which opened its new session Tuesday, Jenkins announced that upon his recommendation, the queen had granted a free pardon to the executed man.

This does not, of course, touch the deeper issues involved in capital punishment, yet admission of such mistakes will doubtless fortify the arguments of opponents to the death penalty—a reconsideration of which is now before the British public. As the *Times* reporter says: "The opponents of capital punishment will probably use it in coming months to fight attempt to restore hanging—now banned on a five-year trial—for murder of policemen and warders."

The theosophical view is expressed by Mr. Judge in answer to a question:

> My view is that capital punishment is both useless and injurious. . . . But theosophically it is far worse. The fact that the sudden killing is legal makes no difference with the laws of nature. The man is suddenly cut off from his body, and, just like a suicide, is condemned to be a "spook." He is dead so far as the body is concerned, but is astrally alive. Worse than a suicide

he is filled with hate and revenge which he must wreak on some one. At first he is not able to do much, but soon he finds that there are sensitive persons on the earth who can be filled with his vicious and raging passions. These poor souls are then influenced to commit crimes; being filled mentally—from the inner planes—with the ideas and passions of the criminal, they are at last moved to do what their mind is filled with. . . . That is why many a crime is suddenly committed by weak persons who appear to be carried away by an outside force. It seems hardly possible that anyone could believe in theosophical and occult doctrines and at the same time commend capital punishment. (THEOSOPHY 39:38.)

"Proof" of the Soul?

The will of James Kidd, an Arizona miner who died in 1951, provides that his estate, amounting to some $200,000, is to go to any person or group able to furnish "some scientific proof of a soul of the human body which leaves at death." Various groups, bodies devoted to psychic research, psychiatric study, and some religious associations, will attempt to qualify for the money, according to the Los Angeles *Times* (Oct. 26, 1966). Attorneys say, the report relates, that "the money also could be awarded to anyone who is merely researching the existence of the soul." This latter provision, if made to apply, might considerably widen the range of possible applicants!

The Laws of Spirit

The practicability of any such demonstration was dealt with many years ago by H. P. Blavatsky. Early in *Isis Unveiled* (I, 42) she wrote on the folly of expecting any sort of "physical" evidence of *spiritual* reality:

In a recent philosophical work, *The Unseen World* [by John Fisk], while showing that from the very definition of the terms, *matter* and *spirit,* the existence of spirit cannot be demonstrated to the senses, and that thus no theory is amenable to *scientific tests,* he deals a severe blow at his colleagues in the following lines:

"The testimony in such a case," he says, "must under the conditions of the personal life, be forever inaccessible. It lies wholly outside the range of experience. However abundant it may be, we cannot expect to meet it. And, accordingly, our failure to produce it does not raise even the slightest presumption against our theory. When conceived in this way, the belief in the future life is without scientific support, and the range of scientific criticism. It is a belief which no imaginable future advance of physi-

cal discovery can in any way impugn. It is a belief which is in no sense irrational, and which may be logically entertained without in the least affecting our scientific habit of mind, or influencing our scientific conclusions." "If now," he adds, "men of science will accept the position that spirit is not matter, nor governed by the laws of matter, and refrain from speculations concerning it restricted by their knowledge of material things, they will withdraw what is to men of religion, at present, their principle cause of irritation."

But, they will do no such thing. They feel incensed at the brave, loyal, and highly commendable surrender of such superior men as Wallace, and refuse to accept even the prudent and restrictive policy of Mr. Crookes.

No other claim is advanced for a hearing of the opinions contained in the present work than that they are based upon many years' study of both ancient magic and its modern form, Spiritualism.

Changes Needed

Demonstrations of the reality of the inner man and his transcendental being and destiny require another order of investigation, productive of evidence that can be neither weighed nor measured, and will surely not be forthcoming as a mere instrument of persuasion in order to obtain a legacy! The truths about the soul are ends in themselves, involving a kind of research that will hardly seek or accept monetary reward. And the wisdom of donors, in such matters, is an indispensable element of the usefulness of their gifts.

From another point of view, what is involved here is the necessity of a new definition of science, one that would include recognition of what have been called "occult and mysterious powers," and acceptance of the methods appropriate to such practice. It is true that certain wary and faltering steps in this direction have been taken by a few psychologists, but the ethical correlations of all such undertakings—implicit in the Objects of the Theosophical Movement—are seldom understood. It is this lack in the science of the West which makes possible the popular confusions concerning scientific approaches to the existence of the "soul."

Electromagnetic Spectrum may be Harmful

According to the Los Angeles *Times,* (Oct. 5, 1966), experiments conducted by Dr. John N. Ott, director of the Environmental Health and Light Research Institute, Sarasota, Fla., suggest that "various elements of the electromagnetic spectrum can change life

behavior." Even rays emitted by the black-and-white picture tube may cause lethargy if television is watched for many hours a day, but the real culprit seems to be the color tube. For example:

> In one experiment, Ott, who is a consultant to UCLA's Neuropsychiatric Institute, placed 3-month-old rats in two cages directly in front of a color TV set. The set was turned on without sound for six hours each weekday and 10 hours on Saturday and Sunday. The animals in one cage were protected from the TV tube by heavy black paper. The animals in the other cage were surrounded by a lead shield 1/8th-inch thick.
>
> Within 10 days the rats protected only by black paper showed abnormal activity, and by 30 days were extremely lethargic. The animals had to be pushed to make them move about the cage. An examination of the animals' brains revealed severe damage in the paper-protected group. The lead-shielded animals also showed brain damage—after a longer exposure—but in a far less degree.

Other Deleterious Effects

Dr. Ott became interested in the biologic effects of light through his interest in time-lapse photography. According to the *Times*:

> While making the time-lapse pictures of budding plants for Walt Disney's "Secrets of Life," Ott noticed that the color of the neon tube used for lighting had a marked effect on the budding capacity of pumpkin plants.
>
> Fish, too, reacted in a variety of ways to different colored lights, in other words, to different wave lengths on the electromagnetic spectrum. Blue light, for example, had no noticeable effect on their ability to mate, but three months of continuous exposure to pink light made 14% of the females and 90% of the males infertile. "It can be said that life evolved under natural sunlight and when any part of the spectrum is withheld, there is an abnormal growth response," Ott said in an interview. He reasons that more than the accustomed amount of any part of the spectrum—visible or invisible—will have a similar effect.
>
> Ott has some experimental evidence to support a theory that the exhaustion experienced by astronauts on recent tether walks may be due to the extreme changes in exposure to light. Another space problem, calcium loss, also appears to be associated with abnormal exposure to certain parts of the spectrum.

Dr. Ott says that manufacturers are aware of the potential hazard and have been installing leaded glass around the tube, but he points out that very few people think about the possible radiation exposure to individuals on the other side of a partition—a baby in a crib, for example. According to Ott, "an international committee on radia-

tion has stated that persons watching TV should remain at least six feet away from the set and not watch it longer than 2,000 hours a year—the equivalent of about 5-1/2 hours each day." Probably few adults watch TV longer than that, but parents should be alert to the possible danger to young children.

Nature's Marvelous Adaptability

Experiments conducted in a simulated Martian atmosphere were reported in the *Wall Street Journal* for May 5, 1966. Sanford Siegel, working for Union Carbide Corp. and NASA, has grown plants in an atmosphere of less than one-tenth of one per cent oxygen, and the rest nitrogen and carbon dioxide (as contrasted with the earth's 21% oxygen). Some results:

> In the Mars Simulator, Mr. Siegel has grown a Peruvian apple cactus for three hundred days. Pine and cedar trees have survived three months. Most impressive, though, was a North African shrub, the Haworthia. One of these lived only a month, but one day Mr. Siegel saw three tiny shoots break ground near the dead plant. The Haworthia, dying, had sent root runners up through the soil. The new plants lived and flourished in the Martian climate until the experiment ended two months later; they were transplanted then to a spot outside the laboratory. There they grew to full size.

Other Interesting Discoveries

Mr. Siegel learned that turnips and radishes sprouted and grew four times faster in an atmosphere of 10 per cent oxygen than did those that were not "oxygen starved"; he raised barley in from 1 per cent to 5 per cent oxygen and found that its ability to break down into starch was doubled; he has found that oats grown at low oxygen levels contain twice as much vitamins C and E as oats grown normally, and have more B-1. Moreover, plants grown at low oxygen levels have an increased resistance to freezing. Mr. Siegel has even planted a foot-high cactus in sea water, finding that "it thrived for a year before he ended the experiment." He further suggests that because of similarity of needs in desert and sea organisms "plants native to dry areas are good subjects for submarine agriculture." Indeed, according to the *Journal,* "Mr. Siegel states flatly that if you aerate (bubble air through water) you can grow anything underwater."